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“A critical review of *ayurvedic* concept of *Paripurna aahar* w. s. r. to balanced diet.”

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Abstract:

Ayurveda is the ancient science of life. Food is a prime requirement of every living organism. So in *Ayurveda*, it is considered as one of the *Upasthambha* along with *Nidra* and *Brahmacharya*. One should consume a diet in proper quantity and according to methods prescribed in *Samhitas* and *Agni bala*. The balanced diet is necessary for the body and all of its systems to function properly. It will help to maintain a healthy weight and to develop immunity. It will provide energy and good sleep. Good nutrition is an important part of a leading healthy lifestyle.

According to modern science, a balanced diet that contains the proper proportions of Carbohydrates, Fats, Proteins, Minerals, and Water necessary to maintain good health². However, in *Ayurveda*, they have mentioned in terms of *Ashta Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatan, Aahar Vidhi, Vidhan*. According to *Charak*, the life of all living things is food. Good Complexion, good voice, happiness, satisfaction, growth, strength, and intelligence all are dependent on food.

INTRODUCTION:

Acharya Charak has mentioned the importance of balanced diet in *Annapanvidhi adhyay*. He has mentioned that we should eat such diet and drinks whose colour, smell, taste and touch are pleasing to the senses, if taken in accordance with the rules, represent the very life of living beings⁴. They provide fuel to the fire of digestion, promote mental and as well as physical strength and complexion and they are pleasing to the senses. Diet plays vital role in maintenance of good health & in prevention and cure of diseases. Our *Acharyas* also talk about quality of food and clarify all the food into 3 types- *Sattva*, *Rajas*, *Tamas*. Our *Acharyas* also mentioned that quantity of diet is also important. We should consume diet in proper quantity that it can easily digest and will not harm our body.

Basic nutrients such as Carbohydrates, fats, proteins are the basis of all life activities. Traditionally the main aim of nutrition is prevent and treat nutritional deficiencies. A balanced diet provides the body with essential nutrition- fluid, macro-nutrients, micro-nutrients and adequate calories

Globalization has seriously affected one's eating habits and enforced many people to consume fancy and high calorie fast food. Ailments like Obesity, food poisoning, dehydration, cardiac problems, diabetes

mellitus, and arthritis have seen profound rise in developing countries. Such unhealthy junk food, processed food, high fat calorie consumption are the notable factors to its contribution. Knowledge about the eating habits, nutritional diet, and quality of unhealthy food, their health impact and preventive measures should be given to create awareness and render health education for a change towards healthy food eating practices. This is my small effort to tell the people importance of balanced diet.

MATERIAL AND METHOD:

- *Ayurvedic* literature collected from classic text of *Ayurved*.

AYURVEDIC CONCEPT OF BALANCED DIET:

Acharya Charak has stated in *Matrashitiya adhayay* that one should consume such diet which promotes health and don't cause any kind of diseases. This type of balanced diet one should consume daily. He also mentioned that one should consume diet according to his *agnibala*. It means one should consume diet in such quantity so that he can easily digest well. The ingested food is transformed into *Sapta dhatu*. So in *Ayurveda* they have mentioned proper directions for taking food. They are called as '*Aaharvidhivisheshayatan*'. *Aahar*

means food. *Vidhi* means methods, *Vishesh* is specific, *Ayatanani* is abode. *Charak Samhita* describes 8 principles of *aahar vidhi*. They are as following –

1. *Prakruti (Nature)*
2. *Karana (Sanskar means ways of preparation)*
3. *Samyoga (combination of two or more)*
4. *Rashi (quantity)*
5. *Desha (habitat and climate)*
6. *Kala (time)*
7. *Upayoga Sanstha (rules to follow)*
8. *Upayokta (Consumer)*

1.Prakruti (Nature of food):

Prakruti means Natural quality of food e.g. *Guru*, *Laghu*. The quantity, *Sanskar*, time of consumption all depend on nature of food. One should also give importance to *Prakruti* of individual.

2.Karan (Sanskar):

Karana is also known as *Sanskara*. It means processing of food which leads to alteration in its basic properties. e.g. *Vrihi* is heavy to digest, becomes light when transformed to *Laja* after frying

3.Samayoga (Combination of two or more):

Samayog means combination of two or more things. e.g. Honey and Ghee. Honey and Ghee taken alone is beneficial to the body but combined together, they become toxic. Taking together is

Viruddhahar) leads to vitiation of *Rakta* and *Srotorodha* and formation of *Ama*.

4.Rashi (Quantity):

Rashi means Quantity. Quantitative analysis is done in terms of *Sarvagraha* and *Parigraha*. *Sarvagraha* means quantity of food taken as a whole. *Parigraha* is the quantity of each of its ingredients. The *Ahara* can be divided into *Guru* and *laghu* on the basis of qualities. Quantity of food depends on digestive power So one should consume diet which is digested in proper time without causing any trouble in daily regime of person.

5. Deha (Habitat):

Desha is considered as *Bhumi* as well as *Deha (Body)*. *Bhumi desha* is classified under these categories- *Jangla*, *Anupa*, *Sadharana*. Considering climatic conditions of *bhumidesha* and *doshik* predominance of *deha desha* one has to select diet.

6. Kala (Time)

The term is used in two senses. *Nityag Kala* and *Awasthik Kala*. *Nityag Kala* means in relation to seasonal awastha in the form of day and night as well as *Ritu*. *Aahara* should be taken according to *Dinacharya* and *Ritucharya* considering the *doshawastha* of the day and *Ritu*. *Avasthika Kala* is considered to be *Vyadhi Avastha*. Eg In *Naveen Jwara*, *Langhana* should be done.

7. Upyoga Samstha (Dietetic Rules) -

Acharya Charak has described Dietetic rules for the consumer in Vimansthana. It includes everything related to diet, how to eat, when to eat, what to eat.

8. *Upyokta (Consumer)*

The consumer is the person who uses the food.

These are the dietetic rules as per *Charak Samhita* for healthy and unhealthy persons.

Aahar Vidhi Vidhan

Aahar Vidhi Vidhan described in our classics which are foundation of dietetics

1. *Ushnam Ashniyat*

One should consume *Ushna* (Hot) food because it gives proper taste and stimulates salivation and other gastric juices. *Ushna* food stimulates Agni and improves digestion.

2. *Snigdham Ashniyat*

One should consume *Snigdha* food as it causes *Agnidipan* and facilitates early digestion.

3. *Matravat Ashniyat*

It means eat in adequate amount. Absence of any cardiac discomfort, no excessive heaviness of stomach, Gratification of senses, subsidence of hunger and thirst, sense of ease in the standing, sitting, lying down, walking, inhaling, exhaling, talking these are the *lakshanas* by which a person can decide that this is *Matravat*.

4. *Jirne Ashniyat*

It simply means eat only after digestion of previous meal. If one takes food before the

digestion of previous meal, it produces *Ama* and provokes *dushti* of all *doshas* and it will start vitiating body elements.

5. *Virya Aviruddham Ashniyat*

One should eat those food materials which are not antagonist in *Virya*. These food materials are very harmful for the body and causes a lot of diseases.

6. *Ishta Deshe Ashniyata*

We should eat in a place which is hygienic and having proper light. Pleasant atmosphere at place of eating gives us healthy state of mind.

7. *Natidrutam Ashniyata* *Nativilambitam Ashniyata*

One should not eat too fast and too slow because both hampers the process of digestion.

8. *Ajalpam, Ahasan, Tanmana* *Bhunjeet*

It is advised not talk and laugh while eating. One should eat food with full concentration.

9. *Atmanamabhisamikshya Samyak*

Keeping all the above things in mind one should eat in appropriate manner.

According to *Charak Acharya* the food eaten by one with *chinta* (Anxiety), *Shok* (Grief), *Bhay* (Fear), *Krodh* (Anger), *Dukh* (Pain), Sedentary habits or keeping awake at night will fail to digest properly.

MODERN CONCEPT OF BALANCED DIET:

Balanced diet a diet which provides adequate intake of both macro-nutrients and micro-nutrients, proper regulation of metabolic processes, and maintenance of an optimal body mass.

Macro-nutrients:

Carbohydrate:

Energy value-1 g yields 16 kJ (3.75 kcal). Minimum of 47% of total daily energy intake. Sources-Sugar, potatoes, rice, pasta, noodles, bread, breakfast cereals
Functions: Provides energy for metabolism. Deficiency-Weight loss, ketosis

Protein:

Energy value -1 g yields 17 kJ (4 kcal) About 15% of total daily energy intake:

Sources-Meat, fish, eggs, nuts, pulses, dairy products, tofu, Quern

Functions-Component of all body tissues; energy source in some situations

Fat:

Energy value- 1 g yields 37 kJ (9 kcal) Should not exceed 35% of total daily energy intake. Sources- Butter and other full-fat dairy products, margarine; cooking oils and fried food; pastry, cakes, biscuits; meat, oily fish, seeds, nuts, chocolate, crisps

Functions-Provides energy for metabolism; energy stores and insulation in body fat;

synthesis of steroid hormones; constituent of cell membranes, and of nerve fibres

Micro-nutrients: Vitamins

Water soluble Vitamin B group

B1 (Thiamin(e)):

Requirement-0.4 mg/1000 kcal. Sources-Fortified breakfast cereals, yeast extract, vegetables, fruit, wholegrain cereals, milk, liver, eggs, pork. **Functions-** Co-enzyme for carbohydrate metabolism.

B2 (Riboflavin):

Requirement-Female 1.1 mg/d Male 1.3 mg/d Sources-Milk, milk products, yeast extract, fortified breakfast cereals
Functions- Co-enzyme for the metabolism of carbohydrate, fat and protein

B3 Niacin (nicotinic acid and nicotinamide):

Requirement-6.6 mg/1000 kcal as nicotinic acid equivalents Sources-Meat, fish, yeast extract, pulses, wholegrains, fortified breakfast cereals
Functions-Energy metabolism, as part of coenzymes NAD and NADP involved in oxidation and reduction reactions

B5 (Pantothenic acid):

Sources-Widespread in food, e.g. liver, eggs, yeast, vegetables, pulses, cereals
Functions-Protein, fat, carbohydrate and alcohol metabolism

B6 (Pyridoxine):

Requirement-Female 1.2 mg/d Male 1.4 mg/d Sources-Meat, fish, eggs, some vegetables, wholegrains
Functions-

Production of haemoglobin and of coenzymes involved in many metabolic processes

Biotin:

Sources-Widely distributed in many foods, e.g. offal, egg yolk, legumes, etc. Can be synthesized by intestinal bacteria
Functions-Essential in fat metabolism

B12 (Cobalamins):

Requirement-15 µg/g of protein Sources-Animal products, meat, eggs, fish, dairy products, yeast extract
Functions-Essential for red blood cell formation and nerve myelination. Needed for use of folate

Folates (folic acid):

Requirement-200 µg/d Sources-Green leafy vegetables, bread, fortified breakfast cereals, yeast extract, liver
Functions-Red blood cell production; DNA synthesis

Vitamin C (ascorbic acid):

Requirement-40 mg/d Sources-Citrus fruits, kiwi fruit, blackcurrants, strawberries; green peppers, green leafy vegetables, potatoes, tomatoes.

Functions: Collagen synthesis, formation of bones, connective tissue, teeth. Iron absorption for red blood cell production. It's also acts as an antioxidant.

Fat soluble:

Vitamin A (retinol):

Requirement-Female 600 µg/d Male 700 µg/d Sources-As retinol in liver, kidney, oily fish, egg yolk, full-fat dairy produce. As the *provitamin* carotenes in

green, yellow, orange and red fruit and vegetables, e.g. broccoli, carrots, apricots, mangoes, sweet potatoes and tomatoes
Functions-Visual pigments in retina, aids night vision. It is essential for normal growth and development of tissues, healthy skin and mucosa. It's Acts as an antioxidant.

Vitamin D (cholecalciferol ergosterol):

Requirement-10 µg/d if housebound
Sources-Oily fish, egg yolk, butter, fortified margarine; Functions-action of ultraviolet rays (sunlight), Calcium and phosphorus homeostasis

Vitamin E (tocopherols tocotrienols):

Sources-Wheat germ, vegetable oils, nuts, seeds, egg yolk, cereals, dark green vegetables
Functions-Antioxidant, Protects against cell membrane damage

Neurological abnormalities;

Vitamin K (phyloquinones menaquinones):

Sources-Green leafy vegetables, fruit and dairy products
Functions-Needed for the production of *prothrombin* and other coagulation factors impaired clotting; liver damage.

.Conclusion

The concept of *Paripurna Aahar*/ Balanced diet according to *Ayurveda* and Modern Science is totally different. Modern science has particularly described *Aahar* according to nutritional value of its components, in

terms of calories as an effect and *Ayurveda* has classified *Aahar* as per different way of ingestion, function, appearance, effect on *dosha*, *panchabhautik* predominance, predominance of *Rasa*, as per cooking style, by the way of cropping up, by origin, *Ayurveda* has described about a wide range of dietetics and nutrition including *Pathyapathya*, *Viruddha Aahar*, discipline of food intake like *Ashta Aahar Vidhi* *Visheshayatana* and *Aahar Vidhi Vidhi*. *Ayurveda* assures healthy life if a person follows proper code of conduct related to intake of food. Lively life is offered by appropriate diet whereas imbalanced diet is

cause of origin of diseases. Thus, Dietetics is the solution to give answers and treatments to many diseases.

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